LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Labour Unity

Founded 1921

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET UNION

1917 · 1957

NOVEMBER

One shilling and sixpence

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Notes of the Month

Happy Birthday

'In our political thinking, that is to say in the thinking of the Western world, it is a change comparable with the change from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican astronomy, from the view that this earth is the centre of the universe to the view that this earth is only a planet in the solar system. The Western society which was once the centre of the political universe is now only a planet, a big planet, no doubt, but still only a planet in a much larger solar system.' **WALTER LIPPMANN, Death of an Illusion, lecture to the University of Minnesota, Spring, 1957.**

THE first feeling on this fortieth anniversary for all who live in the future and not in the past can only be one of joy. Joy that Socialism has come in our time and now embraces close on two-fifths of mankind. Joy that nations everywhere are rising

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from bondage and striding forward along the road of independence. Joy that Socialism has emerged triumphant from the fieriest ordeals any new social order has ever had to face, and is now beginning to demonstrate ever more clearly to the blindest, with daily new miracles of achievement, its superiority in every field of construction, science and culture. When a Conservative M.P. can declare:

> The West is now losing out to Communism. They are leading us in every field—space satellites, rockets, hydrogen weapons, diplomacy and industrial achievement.
>
> (Sir Robert Boothby, M.P., in the *Daily Express*, October 10, 1957.)

that may be the language of panic of a dying order, but it is also a sign of the times.

No Illusions

We can afford no illusions on the road before us. For over thirty-six of these forty years this journal has had the privilege of playing its humble part in the fight of hundreds of millions on the side of socialism. These forty years have seen, not only the glory of victorious achievement, but also all the hardships and difficulties, the temporary setbacks, the uttermost testing of human endurance, accompanying the greatest new birth in human history. We are not yet at the end of the road. In the socialist world the already demonstrated superiority in the rate of advance has still to attain the visibly approaching goal of outstripping the most advanced sectors of the capitalist world in productivity and standards. All the new problems of the growth and development of a dynamically evolving socialist society are still in process of solution. The international situation is ugly. The mad dogs of Western barbarism are still at large. Now the grave menace of the Middle East situation is manifest. Every dying order has always shown itself more reckless, crazed and ferocious, as it senses its approaching doom. Heavy ordeals may still have to be faced in these coming years, before the working people can attain the final victory of their aims of peace and socialism throughout the world. But the future is becoming daily more clear to all. What Marx and Lenin foresaw is in process of realisation at a daily accelerating pace in the modern world. These forty years have *proved* the future. Forty years ago the old American radical journalist, Lincoln Steffens, could visit Russia very shortly after the Revolution (The dirt! The chaos! all that appalled H. G. Wells) and say: 'I have seen the future, and it works'. How much more so today!

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I. Socialism Conquers Space

What a wonderful birthday present! Of course science is international. Only the narrowest of nationalist pigmies would endeavour to counterpose the scientists of one nation against those of another, deny the collective contribution of all, or degrade an historic advance of human civilisation to become an object of nationalist rivalry and jealousy. What is significant in the Soviet achievement in first breaching space to open a new era of limitless horizons for the future of humanity is the *social economic system* which has made this achievement possible. The apex of achievement could only be scaled on the basis of a gigantic underlying structure, not merely of unparalleled educational development (every one sees this now) but of the entire social organisation of production and resources for human benefit which alone could make such an unparalleled level of educational development of an entire people possible, no less than the collective functioning of science in the service of society and the capacity to tackle and accomplish great constructive aims previously believed unattainable.

Storming Heaven

In the United States an enormous outcry has been raised over the question of the priority in sending up a satellite. This Congressional excitement is understandable in a country which, for two years, in contrast to the modest Soviet disclaimers of any competitive intentions or desire for vainglorious prior boasting, had deafened the world with advance hullabaloo publicity about the coming American space Vanguard, and dressed up all its little children in 'space suits'. But when President Eisenhower claimed in extenuation that the United States could have sent up a space satellite first if it had not concentrated all its scientific efforts on the first priority of military aims, he did not realise that he was uttering the self-condemnation of a decaying society. The little globe in the sky is teaching Communism to the world. All the customary propaganda of doubts, scepticism, sneering, denial and denigration could no longer avail against this little piece of material reality circling over the heads of every country and nation. Marx spoke of the heroes of the Paris Commune storming heaven. The song of the Soviet space satellite is the Song of Socialism conquering heaven for mankind.

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Those German Scientists

What has been the impact on the old world? Let us ignore the stale rubbish about German scientists, atom spies, etc., which is still handed out by the lower organs of the gutter press. For example, the *Daily Herald,* October 9:

> It was largely the product of our old enemies—the German scientists who shot V2 rockets at us 13 years ago. The Interplanetary Society experts from Peenemunde, largely taken over by the Russians, have proved that they can work equally at inter-continental warfare or at the conquest of space.

What really happened to the experts of Peenemunde has been recorded by an eye-witness of their surrender (Chapman Pincher, *Daily Express,* August 28, 1957):

> The myth that these Russian achievements are due to the German scientists shanghaied or recruited after the war has again been resurrected. I was involved in the round-up of the German rocket scientists. The facts are that almost all the Germans of note from the main research centre at Peenemunde surrendered to the Americans in Bavaria and were shared out between Britain and the U.S. . . . Indeed the Russians have probably beaten the West because they did not slavishly follow the German lines of research. The British and Americans did—and got bogged down.

The truth, however, seldom overtakes the lie in the millionaire press.

Contradictory Arguments

The favourite arguments in the more 'respectable' organs followed two main lines. First, that a 'dictatorship' can ruthlessly devote resources to technical and scientific development at the expense of the 'ordinary people's standard of life' (*The Times,* October 8, 1957), and by the 'preference of guns to butter' (*Telegraph,* October 7, 1957); whereas in the West 'we are not competing with the Communists in some aimless race for technological laurels; we are attempting to create and maintain and defend good and just societies' (*Telegraph,* October 9, 1957—ha! ha!). Second, that the admitted superiority in the extent of scientific and technical education in the Soviet Union has made the achievement possible, whereas 'education in this country has been starved of money for years, and is still being starved' (*Daily Herald,* October 9, 1957). The two lines of argument are in fact contradictory. For the vast extension of education of the entire people to a level far above that in Britain and the United States is not possible save on the basis of a general raising of social standards. Over these forty years the advance in scientific and technical standards and development, so far from being contrary to the interests of the people, has been

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accompanied by a rate of advance of living standards of the entire people without parallel in economic history.

Strategic Implications

Most significant and characteristic, however, has been the main immediate reaction of Western barbarism to translate the new achievement of scientific and constructive advance into military terms. So, too, the release of atomic energy was immediately translated by the West in terms of the atom bomb, much as if the mastery of electricity had been immediately seen in terms of the electric chair. 'Baleful', 'sinister purposes', 'purely military purposes'—such is the polite and civilised language with which the *Daily Herald* chooses to greet one of the greatest advances of human science since man evolved on earth. It is true that the new constructive advance, alongside the measureless new horizons opened for human progress (including the end of the old pessimistic illusions about the ultimate extinction of human life on a doomed planet), also deals a blow to the crazy bellicose nuclear strategy and vauntings of Western barbarism, and thereby strikes a blow for peace. The 'realist', 'statesman-like' speeches of the Macmillan-Bevan school, claiming that Britain must be a 'Nuclear Power' in order to remain a Great Power on an equality with the Soviet Union and the United States, begin to shrivel in the new perspective. 'This new scientific break-through makes the American idea about "aerial inspection" look out-moded' (*Sunday Times*, October 6, 1957). The American chain of offensive bases ringing the socialist world no longer seem the 'last word' in strategy for 'massive retaliation', but is more and more clearly revealed as mainly a menace to the countries cursed by them. N.A.T.O., S.E.A.T.O. and the rest of the foul gang begin to look like ugly dinosaurs from the age before the satellite and the inter-continental rocket.

Impetus to Peace

The Western nuclear war strategy, still solemnly repeated by Dinosaur Macmillan to a cheering Conservative audience ('The Western possession of the bomb has deterred and still deters the Soviet Union from open aggression'), is in ruins. Not without reason the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* writes:

> To the Western Powers Russia's successful launching of the earth satellite could spell the destruction of the main basis of their military thinking. In recent years Western defence policy has increasingly been based on the

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efficacy of the threat and availability of massive retaliation and ultimately of nuclear bombs as the great deterrent. . . .

When the Soviet I.C.B.M.s are in mass production, there seems no reason why one or more should not be launched simultaneously at each and every centre from which the Western Powers' massive retaliation was to have been launched. . . . At a given moment, therefore, the Russians might hope to wipe out the enemy's entire system of counter-attack. This possibility, too, could have its impact on the international political scene.

(October 11, 1957.)

Is it such a disaster if all the wild bellicose talk about 'massive retaliation' and 'the great deterrent' has to go into the discard, and give place to a serious approach to peaceful co-existence, the banning of nuclear weapons and disarmament? On the contrary, the most favourable possibilities for peace arise from the new conditions, provided the peoples press home their advantage.

For a Summit Conference

The dangers of war, local, regional and major are still grave. The potential regions of explosion are visible, in the Middle East, or from Western Germany, or over Kashmir; and the flames are being fanned by the warmakers. The mad and reckless theory of 'limited war' is being peddled by the Anglo-American strategists. But the only sane conclusion from the new conditions is to press all the more for a Summit meeting, whether of the six leading powers (the U.S., Britain, France, the Soviet Union, China and India), the three (U.S., Britain and the Soviet Union), or the United States and the Soviet Union in direct bilateral negotiations, to carry forward the unfinished business of Geneva in the still more urgent present situation and reach a preliminary basis for peaceful co-existence and disarmament.

Locomotive of Progress

Like every great scientific invention and advance, the little satellite is a powerful engine of progress in every field. It is only necessary to consider the present clamour of demand in the West for the extension of education as the main lesson of the satellite and now indispensable in order to compete with Communism. The Churchills and the Trumans are now discovering that they backed the wrong horse in placing all their stakes on the atom bomb. Listen to Lord First Clown Hailsham addressing the Conservative Conference:

A better public education is an essential condition for our survival as a first class Power.

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Ironic, when the Tory Government by the block grant is restricting educational development in the schools, while 'the latest allocation by the University Grants Committee now precludes any sizeable expansion of academic scientific education in this country for another five years' (K. Mendelssohn, F.R.S., of the Clarendon Laboratory in Oxford, *The Times*, October 8, 1957). Communism is forcing panic-stricken Tories to change their tune and suddenly howl for more education. But even so they get the sum wrong. Lord Hailsham's revealing statement lays bare the working of their minds. No, Lord Hailsham. More and better education is needed for the advancement of the people, of culture, of civilisation —not as a patent device to keep Britain 'a first class Power' (in which case the extension of education in a small country would appear to be regarded as a superfluous luxury). The little satellite is still only at the beginning of its task to break down the ingrained obscurantism and reaction of Western barbarism.

Communism Leads the World

So in every field the impact of the advancing socialist world, and of the consequent victorious tide of national liberation, is more and more visibly driving forward every step of progress in the backward capitalist world. Take Little Rock. Why, after all these decades of White supremacy and racial oppression, this sudden scramble of the rulers of U.S. finance-capital to reverse the engines and begin to modify a little of the segregation in the South?—which only a few years ago Secretary of State Byrnes, champion eloquent apostle of 'democracy' in the United States, used to uphold as the Ark of the Covenant? They are quite open in their reasons. 'Otherwise Communism will draw the propaganda advantage.' 'Otherwise we lose the coloured majority of mankind to Communism.' Thus Communism is already beginning to lift some of the burden of oppression of the Negroes in the Deep South. Similarly the sudden rush of philanthropic concern for 'aid' and 'development' to the backward colonial peoples and under-developed countries, in place of the previous standard Bevin doctrine of their contribution to 'our wage-packets'. The reason is openly proclaimed. 'Otherwise they will turn to Communism.' So in every sphere. Full Employment? The Soviet Union led the way over a third of a century ago, and the West begins to stumble after with a great blazon of trumpets. Universal Health Service? Half Pay Pensions? Equal Pay? No Colour Bar? Communism leads, and the capitalist West begins to stumble after, late, slowly, incompletely, with heavy qualifications.

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But the social contradictions of class society hamper progress and prevent more than a very weak and wavering echo. This is most significantly shown in the present economic situation in the capitalist world.

II. Seven Per Cent

What have these forty years brought for the capitalist world? It is characteristic that this fortieth anniversary of the Soviet Union has been signalised by the constructive triumph of the space satellite, while in Britain this same year of anniversary has been signalised by a return to a Bank Rate of 7 per cent for the first time for thirty-seven years. The 7 per cent Bank Rate is at once a symptom of economic instability and of the depth of the chronic crisis of British capitalism since the first world war, and the signal and instrument for the most intense economic offensive on the standards of the people. All the sunshine pictures of the Tory Government's initial propaganda have given place to the new campaign for austerity, in the same way as the Labour Government's initial sunshine pictures gave way to the blast of crisis and Austerity Cripps (indeed *The Times* on October 11 claimed that 'Mr. Thorneycroft has shown himself a Chancellor almost out of the Cripps' mould'). At first the Government sought to claim that this ferocious raising of the Bank Rate was only a temporary measure to counter 'foreign speculators', and that the basic economic position was 'sound'. But their later statements have abundantly revealed their consciousness of deeper economic disease, and their determination to use the increased Bank Rate and accompanying measures of credit restriction and cutting back of capital investment in order to launch a classic offensive against the workers' standards and take a tough line with the trade unions in the name of the fight against 'inflation'. We have here a situation, not of a limited temporary currency exchange problem in isolation, but rather of the opening of an offensive more comparable in certain respects to 1920, 1925 or 1931.

Whither World Capitalism?

For what is happening in Britain cannot be separated from the unstable international economic situation of capitalism. When Harold Wilson at the Labour Party Conference declared that 'I do not know whether it will be slump or inflation' when the next Labour Government comes to power, he was revealing the real

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perspective of capitalism seen by the Labour Party leaders, when they temporarily forget their propaganda for babes about the new 'reformed' 'progressive' 'people's capitalism' with permanent full employment and the ironing out of crises. For it is not only the pound that is shaking. We are witnessing the highest point in the battle of the great finance-capitalist monopolies in a now restricted capitalist world. This battle is typified at its apex in the battle of the Dollar, the Mark and the Pound; with the Dollar and the Mark in full offensive, and the Pound weakening. Already the Franc has gone down. The Finnish Mark has gone down with a heavy depreciation of 39 per cent, and before we dismiss the significance of the symptom of Finland as only a minor country, let us not forget that it was the Austrian bank crash which was the immediate factor unloosing the avalanche of the world economic crisis of a quarter of a century ago. Only a fool would look for the mechanical repetition of past situations in the present new and unparalleled development of monopoly capitalism in extreme decay, with a vastly increased unevenness of development, and alongside an advancing socialist world. But only a fool would fail to see the increasing instability of the present situation of world capitalism, with signs that the temporary, partial, relative stabilisation of the preceding period may be drawing to a close.

Capitalist Prophets of Gloom

The dollar crisis, epitomising the extreme unevenness of development of United States capitalism and of the other capitalist countries, and the uncertainties of the economic prospect in the United States, dominate the present world economic situation of capitalism. With gloom the *United Nations World Economic Survey* for 1956 summarised the outlook for 1957:

> The outlook is clouded with uncertainties. No acceleration in economic activity can be foreseen in the immediate future.

The Times on September 11 spoke of the 'anxiety in various parts of the world, not least in the United States itself', following the 'failure of American industrial activity to continue its expansion during the last seven or eight months', and the consequent fall in the demand for raw materials, with disturbing consequences in the primary producing countries.

Dollar Crisis

On the dollar gap (supposed to have been 'solved' by the Marshall Plan) the recently published monumental study 'The World Dollar

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Problem', by D. MacDougall, Churchill's economic adviser during the war and former Economic Director of O.E.E.C., reaches the melancholy conclusion:

> If our analysis is at all near the mark, a favourable or neutral trend is much less likely than an adverse one, and, if this is at all substantial, recurring dollar shortage may be expected (p. 325).

From this analysis he offers the perspective:

> It is only prudent to assume that the rest of the world will at some future time run into serious deficit with the U.S. when its reserves are at a low level. Temporary discrimination against her, and probably the suspension of currency convertibility will then unfortunately be necessary if employment and trade are to be maintained. Devaluation may be inevitable as well, and should not be delayed, once it has been clearly recognised as a necessity, though a regrettable one (p. 414).

This is the perspective of the most experienced capitalist expert in the field. The Pound has already gone down twice before the Dollar through two devaluations, in 1931, and 1949. Would sterling as a world currency survive a third devaluation? But the rôle of sterling as a world currency is the foundation structure of British imperialism. Hence the gravity of the present crisis and the grim seriousness of the offensive of the ruling class against the workers in order to seek to solve the crisis on their backs.

Bankruptcy of Tory Government's Remedies

But can the Tory Government's remedies solve the gathering economic difficulties? For it is not true, as the Government's theory professes, that increases of wages and consumption underlie the problem. According to the International Labour Office increases of real wages between 1953 and 1956 in the United Kingdom were below those in West Germany, Japan or France, and less than half of one per cent above the U.S. The proportion of the national income going to wages was lower in 1956 than in 1946, and indeed lower than in 1890 (*L.R.D. Fact Service*, October 5, 1957). The real waste of resources through the Government's policy, especially the war policy, continues. The higher interest rates and credit squeeze not only strike at all social services, but hit all smaller business, and all with lower incomes, payers on mortgages, etc. At the same time, while British technical equipment is behind the level of the United States and West Germany, the cutting back of capital construction development increases this disparity, and makes British capitalism less competitive.

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Lower Production

Thus, while the Government preaches increased production, its measures are calculated to decrease production. This is intelligible as a policy to create unemployment (lower production) and thereby seek to weaken the unions and attack wages. But it is not surprising that it has raised an outcry from powerful sections of the industrialists. Thus Lord Chandos, Chairman of Associated Electrical Industries and on the board of I.C.I., has complained:

> The Government exhort us, as industrialists, first to increase our productivity, the output per man-hour, or still more important, the output per man-year. They ask us to increase our competitive power in the world's export market. They ask us to maintain our prices in the face of any increase in wages, and they tell us at the same time that we must achieve all these objectives without spending any money at all. If I may make a rather sour remark, it does not appear to occur to Ministers of any political complexion that this combination is impossible even to chemical companies and even less possible to engineering companies (*The Times*, October 10, 1957).

The comments of the workers would be even more 'sour'.

Where is the Opposition?

It is in this situation that the policy of the trade union and political labour movement in resisting this offensive and conducting the fight for a radical alternative programme is of paramount importance for the future of Britain. The main weakness of the Brighton Labour Party Conference, in contrast to the firm stand of the Trades Union Congress, lay not merely in the retreat from the aims of socialism and acceptance of a right wing policy for co-operation with monopoly capitalism, but also, as an inevitable consequence of this, in the conspicuous failure to present a positive alternative programme to meet the present economic situation in Britain. The debate on the economic situation was a flop. Denunciation of the Tory Government was abundant; but Harold Wilson's speech for the Executive could be scrutinised in vain for a coherent alternative programme. Nor indeed could such an alternative programme be forthcoming, so long as the foundations of the imperialist foreign policy and war policy, expressed in N.A.T.O., the Anglo-American alliance, etc., were accepted (Bevan's plea against 'dismantling the whole fabric of Britain's international relationships'), while the giant capitalist monopolies were officially declared to be 'serving the nation well'. It is in this context that we need to approach the significance of the Brighton Labour Party Conference.

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III. After Brighton

Nothing is to be gained by minimising the gravity of the outcome of the Brighton Labour Party Conference. It is true there were also positive results. The pledge to repeal the Rent Act was forced on the Executive by the feeling of the delegates, only the day after the *Daily Herald* had declared that the Executive would never agree to it, even though the battle to make such repeal really effective and not largely formal has still to be fought. On pensions the demand for the £3 is now official policy, despite continued scurvy treatment of dependents and gravely unsatisfactory features of the general scheme. On foreign policy the decisions for suspending the tests, for international agreement to ban nuclear weapons and stop their manufacture, and for a European Security Treaty and German re-unification within the framework of such a Treaty, represented steps forward. But on the basic questions of monopoly capitalism, nationalisation and socialism, no less than on the basic imperialist foreign policy of N.A.T.O., the American alliance, American bases in Britain and capitalist exploitation of the colonies, the outcome represented a victory for the right wing against the socialist wing of the Labour Party.

What kind of Labour Government?

What is the position? If the general political line adopted at Brighton is maintained, the next Labour Government has been made safe for capitalism, whatever the militant moods and upsurge that may arise among the workers. The satisfaction of the capitalist press is open and unconcealed. The Labour Party, purrs *The Times,* 'is well rid of its fixation about nationalisation', and can now, it is further suggested by this kindly patron, easily drop the 'harmless outlet' and 'superfluous sop' of imaginary alternative paths to socialism only put forward as a 'manœuvre' to defeat nationalisation. 'Congratulate Mr. Bevan on his new realism', jubilates the Conservative *Daily Express;* while Foreign Secretary Lloyd welcomes 'the new Mr. Bevan'. Bi-partisanship becomes once again the order of the day. Thorneycroft, as we have noted, is proclaimed by *The Times* 'a Chancellor almost out of the Cripps mould', while Minister of Labour Macleod gleefully quotes Gaitskell in support of the Government's policy 'to keep unemployment at the lowest level compatible with the avoidance of inflation'. ('This phrase is not mine, but I would accept it and proclaim it; it was said by Mr. Gaitskell as Chancellor of the Exchequer in March, 1951'—Iain

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Macleod speaking at Felixstowe, October 4, 1957.) Gaitskell and Bevan race to Macmillan as soon as they receive the Khrushchov letter on the Middle East. This renewal of bi-partisanship (temporarily broken in the political field over Suez, and repudiated by the Blackpool T.U.C. in the industrial field) is seen as of vital importance by the capitalist class for the coming period, in view of the prospect of deepening industrial struggles and the manifest crisis of Britain's economic-political position.

From Blackpool to Brighton

How did this happen? The Blackpool T.U.C. had revealed a very high level of left currents and decisions, with explicit repudiation of the Government's demand for industrial co-operation, and renewed emphasis on nationalisation. At Brighton the same unions, together with the constituency parties (predominantly left in feeling) moved to the right. The same subjective left feelings of the mass of the delegates were as conspicuously present at Brighton as at Blackpool, the same class feelings, the same hatred of the Tory Government and the employers and landlords, the hatred of the nuclear strategy, the emotional desire for an advance to socialism. Gaitskell himself showed his recognition of this true feeling of the delegates, when he said that, if the Executive had put forward a programme for the extension of nationalisation, 'you would have probably received it with acclamation'. Hence the extraordinary manœuvres both in the pre-conference discussion and in the conference to confuse the issues. But the fact remains that the Report on Industry, this milestone in the public transition of the Labour Party from the formal aim of socialism to direct Stock Exchange alliance with monopoly capitalism, was adopted by a majority of 4 to 1, with the support of nearly all the major unions except the railwaymen, and by possibly one-third of the constituency parties.

Election Psychosis?

Why was the left defeated? Election psychosis? The sense of an impending election and the desire to avoid too sharp divisions on policy on the eve of an election? This element was present. But it is an inadequate explanation. For a victorious election programme requires to be capable of arousing enthusiasm; and, whatever may be said on the main programme on industry adopted, it certainly roused no enthusiasm, but only doubts, 'misunderstanding'

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(according to the platform) and scepticism, partially soothed with vague hypothetical reassurances about possible future nationalisation 'if and when'. Similarly the favourite ace argument of Gaitskell that the test of a successful electoral programme must be its capacity to appeal to the middle-of-the-road, lukewarm, non-political, apathetic electoral fringe is a fallacy exploded by the electoral record. It was precisely the bold programme of 1945, with its socialist appeal and extensive nationalisation proposals (carried against the platform in 1944) which aroused the enthusiasm of supporters, thereby rallied the waverers and won sweeping victory. It was precisely the Gaitskell-type programme of retreat and evasion in 1950, 1951 and 1955, which discouraged supporters, increased the apathy of the apathetic, spread doubts of the difference between the parties, and led to defeat.

Disorganisation of the Left

The plain fact must be faced that the potential left majority, which was as present at Brighton as at Blackpool, was defeated at Brighton because it defeated itself—that is, had not yet reached the necessary stage of political clarity, organisation, unity and leadership to win victory. It is now fashionable among some left supporters bitterly to blame Bevan and Bevanism. This savours too much of the savage belabouring his sacred idol. The real issue is deeper than one of individual leaders. It is true that the rôle of the eight representatives on the Executive who had been elected as champions of the militant fight for socialism against Gaitskellism, by switching to unity with the right wing, disorganised the left and played a key part in the outcome. This was a central weapon of the right wing strategy. It was notable that on colonial policy it was Barbara Castle who was put up to defeat the Paddington amendment for ending colonial plunder and returning their resources to the colonial peoples. But to treat this familiar type of situation as a mere question of the rôle of particular leaders would be to conceal its real political significance, in much the same way as the official Labour version of 1931 seeks to present it as the mere passing over of three individual leaders.

'Collapse of Bevanism'

The so-called 'collapse of Bevanism', the disintegration of the 'Bevanites', the embarrassment, self-contradictions and gymnastic

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wriggles of *Tribune* under these conditions, have now become the subject of universal comment. Indeed, the attempt to cover up the basic retreat from socialism on the Wednesday by a last sortie of a section of the Bevanites against Bevan on the Thursday, over the H-bomb, was only a symptom of this embarrassment. For the resolution advocating unilateral renunciation of the H-bomb, while undoubtedly reflecting genuine feelings of a section of the delegates, mainly on pacifist lines, only served in practice once again to divide the left and play into the hands of the right wing policy. For the left to blame particular leaders would be to blame the mirror, since in that case the responsibility is thrown back on victims who accepted the method of attempting to build a movement around a handful of parliamentary leaders without a common programme. The lesson of the 'collapse of Bevanism' at Brighton was not just a lesson about the rôle of particular leaders. It was the lesson of the inexorable outcome of a specific *political trend,* the trend of 'Bevanism' and 'Tribunism'—a lesson carrying the most important conclusions for the future of the left, of the fight for socialism, and of unity of the left.

'Bevanism' and 'Tribunism'

What was the theory of 'Bevanism' and 'Tribunism'? It was the theory of an *Anti-Communist Left* in the Labour Party—of a Left organised, not on the basis of a common programme, but on the basis of individual leaders and subjective emotions, without coherent programme or policy, sniping at the communist left as much as at the right wing, and thereby spurning unity of the left forces and ensuring the eventual victory of the right wing. The debacle of this trend did not spring suddenly out of nothing at Brighton. The final collapse was prepared by the whole preceding development, especially the development of the preceding twelve months, during which the main fury of this grouping was directed against the socialist world over Hungary and Poland, and against the Communist Party because of its fidelity to internationalism and resolute stand for revolutionary Marxist principles in opposition to revisionism. Along these lines common ground was renewed with the right wing, and indeed with the whole campaign of the capitalist world. Brighton was only the completion of this evolution. The lesson needs to be learned by all serious fighters on the left, not in bitterness or recrimination, but with understanding—to build anew the left on sounder principles, on a basis of common policy rather than

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individual leaders, and of co-operation of all left militants, communist and non-communist, for common progressive and socialist aims.

Trade Unions and Politics

No less serious are the lessons in relation to the trade unions. The main body of the overwhelming majority for the Report on Industry, which in practice ditched nationalisation in favour of shareholding participation in the capitalist monopolies, was provided by the weight of nearly all the major unions, most of whom are committed by their own conferences to nationalisation for their own industries. The National Union of Mineworkers, so long well in the vanguard of the fight for the nationalisation of their own industry, voted against the extension of nationalisation to other industries, just as previously they have voted against the Plan for Engineering. The Amalgamated Engineering Union, committed to the Plan for Engineering, equally voted against: the Transport and General Workers, similarly, after Cousins had stated that they would never accept for themselves shareholding as a substitute for nationalisation. It is true there were substantial minorities, ranging from one-third to nearly one-half, in the major delegations. It is true that the Report on Industry came out after the union conferences, so that the membership had no possibility to mandate their delegates.

Towards the Next Stage

But the fact remains that a majority of unions, committed to nationalisation for their own industries, provided a majority at Brighton against the extension of nationalisation. Had all the unions, committed by their own members' decisions to nationalisation for their own industries, come together with a common plan, they could have swept that conference, with the enthusiastic support of the constituency parties. This failure, and the sectionalism revealed in this failure, is a salutary reminder of the extent to which the powerful *trade union consciousness* and solidarity, already so splendidly developed as the foundation of the British labour movement, has still to be carried forward to full *political class consciousness,* which still appears only fitfully at the most militant moments of trade union consciousness. Just as in the case of Bevanism and the fight of the left in the constituency parties, so in this situation in the trade unions, the whole experience powerfully demonstrates and reinforces the inescapable necessity of the political party of the fight for socialism, the Communist Party, conducting its fight in

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the midst of the working class and the mass working class organisations, if capitalist policy is not to dominate the labour movement. Brighton provided the crushing answer to those who would have had the Communist Party dissolve itself, in place of recognising that the way forward lies through the recognition of the equal rights of the Communist Party within the broad labour movement, the ending of bans and discrimination, and the co-operation of all, communist and non-communist, who fight for the victory of a socialist policy within the labour movement.

A Call to Battle

Brighton was not the last word. The paramount need now is not recrimination on the past, but to rally the fight forward. The battle before us is not simply over the programme of a future Labour Government. We are already faced with the urgent needs of the *present* battle against the offensive of the Tory Government and the employers; and only the effectiveness of this battle will make it possible to win the people for the defeat of Toryism and the return of a Labour Government with a new programme. The characteristic feature of the outlook presented from the platform at Brighton was not only passivity (the electoral-parliamentary outlook of waiting for the next election and the swing of the pendulum to bring a majority). It was pessimism and defeatism with regard to Britain's future, and the future of the working class and socialism. When Harold Wilson gave 'slump or inflation' as his perspective of British capitalism in the coming period; when all the appeals were made to the workers to accept sacrifices in any advance of standards or even reductions (the same tune, whether the subject was pensions or colonial policy); when, in face of the manifest crisis of Britain's capitalist economy, the necessity of socialism would be abstractly recognised, but it was declared impossible to get the electorate to accept it or for a reformist Labour Government to carry out—all this demonstrated the bankruptcy of the old stage of leadership in the labour movement, alongside parallel bankruptcy of Toryism. The situation calls aloud for the activity of all those who have confidence in Britain's future and in socialism: in the capacity of the working class to defeat the present offensive of capitalism; bring down the Tory Government and return a Labour Government with a radical new programme, as the first step on the road to effective working class political power and a Government for socialism; and in the capacity of the working class to build socialism also in this country.

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'Wake Up, Britain!'

Addressing the Conservative Conference, Selwyn Lloyd, rhetorically asked the question:

> What is the message radiated from the Soviet satellite, this sign from the heavens?

And he offered his version of the answer as it might come from the satellite:

> 'I am a product of Soviet technology and Soviet education. Wake up, Britain!'

Let us translate the foreign term 'Soviet' into the plainly understood term 'Socialist', and the message runs:

> 'I am a product of Socialist technology and Socialist education. Wake up, Britain!'

With this little adaptation in translation we can gladly express agreement with the message suggested by Mr. Selwyn Lloyd.

October 17, 1957. R.P.D.

V. GORDON CHILDE

April 14*th*, 1892—*October* 19*th*, 1957

We pay tribute to the memory of V. Gordon Childe, who enriched the science of our age with his brilliant researches into the origins of human civilisation. Childe was a consistent Marxist alike in his academic work and in his political outlook. He was a valued friend and contributor to Labour Monthly. *His contributions included 'A Labour Premier Meets His Masters', 'The Significance of Soviet Archæology', 'Greek Science and Society', 'Marxism and the Classics', etc.*

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FORTY YEARS ON

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

FORTY years after the October Revolution, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics today has 'no Fellow in the Firmament'; whilst on earth she is now one of the two greatest powers. In a little while, she will be the greatest on earth too.

She has reached this position in forty years—not very much longer than it took us, in London, to get Waterloo Bridge rebuilt. At the start, she was poor, backward, starving, almost wholly illiterate, almost wholly unindustrialised, and encircled by formidable enemies; her future must have appeared hopeless to all observers save the 'dreamers in the Kremlin'. But her workers and peasants took power, ended the long rule of feudal land-owners and capitalists, and began to build their new world, by their own unaided efforts, on the war-devastated ruins of a long-decayed Tsarist empire. It was the greatest event in modern history. These workers and peasants did more than establish a powerful state. They ended exploitation, starvation, illiteracy. They have built vast industries, and created a new agriculture, replacing the 'idiocy' of the old peasant life. They have carried education to higher levels, and placed it on broader bases, than has been done anywhere before: their achievements in science and technology have already begun to demonstrate this in a way none can overlook. They have developed cultural life to its highest level, on an all-embracing basis, creating indeed the world's first universal culture. And they have virtually ended the inequality of women, and of coloured, minority, and colonial peoples.

Their advance, incredibly rapid as it has been, would have been even more rapid and sensational if it had not been for the injury to Soviet economy caused by the Second World War, and by the need to prepare over many years to meet such a war. Whilst the Soviet peoples were actively engaged in the war, they faced the terrible ferocity, and the great initial advances, of the Nazi invasion. They bore unprecedented losses and suffering before they carried their banners to final victory in Central Europe. Most of the time, they had very little help, direct or indirect, from their allies; the great industrial state of Britain, for example, received far more 'lease-lend' aid from the U.S.A. than they did. Moreover, Winston Churchill intrigued endlessly to prevent or delay the Second Front in the West, in order to weaken the U.S.S.R.; and Foreign Secretary

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Bevin boasted in Parliament of his policy of keeping British casualties down to the minimum whilst Soviet citizens died in millions.

Since the war ended, the U.S.S.R. has not merely recovered from her vast losses, but has increased the speed of her forward march. At the same time, she has done more than any other government or people to build up a mass movement for peace; and, whilst successfully developing nuclear energy and nuclear weapons, has done much to secure agreement that such weapons shall not be used.

It is not uninteresting to seek to estimate the achievements of the U.S.S.R. by the reactions of the capitalist world. These are quite astonishing. Primarily as an answer to the successes of the Socialist world—even if also, secondarily, as part of a cunning campaign against the working-class forces of the whole world (encouraged in their advance by the successes of the U.S.S.R.)—the anti-Soviet and anti-Communist witch-hunt has been carried, in the U.S.A., Western Europe, and in many other countries, to an extreme which resembles a paranoiac obsession. In every political speech or broadcast, in every crisis, in every country, everything unwelcome to capitalist rulers is blamed upon the Soviet Union and on 'Communist subversion'. (It is almost a relief to read the weather report, in which the blame is only occasionally laid on Communism.) One is forced to conclude that the rulers of the 'West' at any rate are so completely convinced of the inevitable victory of the Socialist world that they cannot get it out of their thoughts for five minutes.

That is a very short statement. It leaves unmentioned many remarkable achievements; it 'plays down' all the colour and glory of a great epic; and it does not develop the literally epoch-making launching of the satellite, the scientific achievement of a great body of Soviet citizens the majority of whom must be the sons and daughters of illiterate peasants! Think back to the un-Socialist, wholly capitalist or feudal world, not just of Tsarism but of imperialism generally, into which the great new phenomenon of a State determined to be Socialist thrust itself, in 1917.

When the Great October Socialist Revolution took place I was thirty years old. I remember it well; and I remember the old un-Socialist world into which it was born. The rulers of the great countries did not know how to live in peace, or how to maintain in safety their apparently stable but in fact utterly insecure and hopeless world. For three years before 1917, they had blown their own and each other's workers and peasants to pieces by the hundreds of thousands in their quarrels over their 'rights' to exploit hundreds of thousands of other workers and peasants; war was one of their

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trades; they were not even very clever in it, but they knew no way out of it.

One of the greatest achievements of the U.S.S.R. is that Soviet policy on peace and peaceful co-existence today has given new meaning and content in all progressive circles throughout the world to peace as a *positive* policy. It is no longer just a temporary absence of war. Peace is becoming part of the constructive policy of the world. Now, or very soon, the peoples can choose to live in peace, to live in a secure and hopeful world.

How great a period of world history are these forty years! And how much greater will the next forty years be.

FROM CLYDESIDE TO NEVA

WILLIAM GALLACHER

EARLY in 1918, the delegates of the Clyde Workers' Committee, inspired by the October Revolution, attended a meeting of the Glasgow May Day Committee, and insisted that the forthcoming demonstration be called for Wednesday, First of May, instead of the first Sunday, as was the usual practice. Most of the old trade union officials were against: the workers, they said, would not come out. They'll come out all right, we answered. The decision was taken and they came out in the greatest May Day demonstration Glasgow had ever seen. From the demonstration we sent heartfelt fraternal greetings to the young Socialist Republic, only six months old.

Now it is forty years, and what a change! When we first sent May Day greetings there was Civil War; wars of intervention; the *cordon sanitaire;* transport was disorganised; there was shortage of materials; of coal; of food; of clothing; of all but one thing—an unconquerable revolutionary spirit. After a visit to Moscow, Wells wrote to the *Daily Mail* and forecast collapse of the 'Bolshevik régime'. Churchill followed with an endorsement of this intelligent estimate. All the political and economic pundits were in full agreement with them that collapse and chaos was certain. But the Russian workers and peasants, led by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, battled through, overcoming bankruptcy and shortages as well as enemies without and within. Mighty undertakings have been successfully carried through in after years; but the strivings and sufferings, the unparalleled heroism of these early years made

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the later victories possible. This we must never forget. From 'the shabby legacy of the Tsar', as Khrushchov put it, a mighty, powerful and prosperous country has arisen. This has demonstrated beyond any possible question what genuine socialists have always maintained: whilst the capitalist class cannot do without the working class, the working class can do without the capitalist class. In fact, very much better, as these forty years have proved. If from a ruin they have achieved so much, what will they not do in the next forty years; starting with the most up-to-date modern machinery and an army of technicians and scientists far away beyond anything in the capitalist countries? May the British and American workers take this lesson to heart! They also can speed ahead when they break the chains of capitalism. For that great aim we must strive with all our energy; and with that thought in mind, as one of those who sent greetings to the infant Republic, with great pride and joy I now offer my heartfelt fraternal greetings on this, the Fortieth Anniversary of the first Workers' Republic—the mighty stronghold of peace and socialism.

THE RUSSIAN WORKERS IN THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

TURN over the pages of any bourgeois writers on the Soviet Union and you will be struck by one thing, if you believe in socialism. None of them imagines the Soviet working class played any independent part in either the great Socialist Revolution or in the 40 years building of Soviet society. Even the most objective, in practice, presents the Soviet proletariat as a great voiceless and faceless multitude, which different personalities or groups of Bolshevik leaders have directed hither or thither.

This is not surprising. One of the diseases with which capitalism infects the minds of its apologists is disbelief in the capacity of the class it exploits for independent action and thinking. In this respect British historians in no way differ from Russian Tsarists. Shortly before the October Revolution, *Novoye Vremya*, the most notorious of Russian reactionary newspapers, wrote:

> Let us suppose for a moment that the Bolsheviks win. Who will govern us then? Cooks, perhaps—those experts in cutlets and beefsteaks? Or firemen? Stablemen, stokers? Or maybe nursemaids will hurry to

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meetings of the Council of State in between washing nappies? Who will it be? Who are to be the statesmen? Maybe toolmakers will take charge of the theatres, plumbers become diplomats, joiners look after the posts and telegraphs? Or maybe the stablemen will become provincial governors? Stablemen, nursemaids, cooks—these are the people who, according to the Bolsheviks' ideas, are evidently destined to rule our country. Will that ever be? No! Is it possible? To that insane question History will give the Bolsheviks its authoritative reply.

Well, of course, History has. President Voroshilov was a blacksmith, and his predecessor Kalinin was a toolmaker. Premier Bulganin is the son of a flour-mill worker and Mikoyan's father was a carpenter. Marshal Zhukov began life as a furrier. Khrushchov was a coalminer and Shvernik a metal worker. Foreign Minister Gromyko is the son of an agricultural labourer; most of his younger diplomats today have the same social origin. As for stablemen, stokers and nursemaids, there are plenty of them in the Supreme Soviets of the U.S.S.R. and of its fifteen constituent Republics—many, too, holding positions no less important in the life of the country than those of the Tsar's governors, though without their autocratic powers.

But this is only part of History's answer. What stands out during the whole forty years of the Soviet Union, for those who are not blinded by the bourgeois writers' obsession with the conflict of personalities, is the decisive part of the industrial workers in establishing and consolidating Soviet power in Russia, in building socialism and in the present advance towards communist society. Without the support, and still more without the initiative and intelligence of the workers, no personalities however great could have done these things. And the genius of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has lain above all in the fact that, armed with revolutionary Marxism, it has constantly sought and found the ear of the industrial working class in all its policies.

Look at the record—or some of its main stages.

The armed factory workers—the Red Guards of Petrograd—were the striking force which carried out the Socialist Revolution of November 6-7, 1917, supported by detachments of sailors from the Baltic Fleet and units of the old army. Growing swiftly from 20,000 in November to 100,000 in April, 1918, the Red Guards proved the backbone and supplied the main commanders of the new Red Army which smashed the Whites in two years of Civil War, and also of the Cheka—the Extraordinary Commission which broke up counter-revolution and foiled espionage in the rear. The

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Poems by

I HEARD an Angel singing
When the day was springing,
'Mercy, Pity, Peace
'Is the world's release.'
Thus he sung all day
Over the new mown hay,
Till the sun went down
And haycocks looked brown.
I heard a Devil curse
Over the heath & the furze,
'Mercy could be no more,
'If there was nobody poor,
'And pity no more could be,
'If all were as happy as we.'
At his curse the sun went down,
And the heavens gave a frown.
Down pour'd the heavy rain
Over the new reap'd grain,
And Miseries' increase
Is Mercy, Pity, Peace.

From Blake's *Sketch Book*, about 1793.

LET the slave grinding at the mill run out into the field,
Let him look up into the heavens & laugh in the bright air;
Let the inchained soul, shut up in darkness and in sighing,
Whose face has never seen a smile in thirty weary years,
Rise and look out; his chains are loose, his dungeon doors are open;
And let his wife and children return from the oppressor's scourge.
They look behind at every step & believe it is a dream,
Singing: 'The Sun has left his blackness & has found a fresher morning,
'And the fair Moon rejoices in the clear & cloudless night;
For Empire is no more, and now the Lion & Wolf shall cease.'

From *AMERICA: A PROPHECY*, about 1793.

These poems are printed in celebrati
William Blake, the g

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'iam Blake

O, FOR a voice like thunder, and a tongue
To drown the throat of war!—When the senses
Are shaken, and the soul is driven to madness,
Who can stand? When the souls of the oppressed
Fight in the troubled air that rages, who can stand?
When the whirlwind of fury comes from the
Throne of God, when the frowns of his countenance
Drive the nations together, who can stand?
When Sin claps his broad wings over the battle,
And sails rejoicing in the flood of Death;
When souls are torn to everlasting fire,
And fiends of Hell rejoice upon the slain,
O who can stand? O who hath caused this?
O who can answer at the throne of God?
The Kings and Nobles of the Land have done it!
Hear it not, Heaven, thy Ministers have done it!

From *POETICAL SKETCHES*, a Prologue Intended for a Drama, King Edward the Fourth, written before 1778.

I WANDER thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.
In every cry of every Man,
In every Infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.
How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.
But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

LONDON, From *Songs of Experience*.

he 200th anniversary of the birth of
glish poet and artist

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workers' control committees, elected in the factories to supervise the production and financial activities of the old managements (many of them before November, but legalised thereafter), were a school of industrial administration for thousands of workers in the first months after the Socialist Revolution. Contrary to legend, most of the workers did not try and run industry on the syndicalist principle that each factory belonged to its workmen. Only where Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries or Anarchists temporarily had the upper hand did this sometimes happen. It was the factory committees themselves (notably those of Petrograd at their conference in November, 1917) who declared at once that workers' control must be the preparatory stage for public ownership under State control. By December, 1920, over 60 per cent managers of nationalised factories which made victory in the Civil War possible were from the bench.

In May, 1918, the Civil War was developing, and the kulaks (village capitalists) tried to starve the towns of food and raw materials. Factory workers formed over 120 'food detachments', which went into the countryside to help the poor peasants to requisition kulak stocks at fixed prices. In 1919 there were over 1,000 such detachments, controlled by the Central Council of Trade Unions. By the end of that year 80 per cent of the members of county food committees were workmen drawn from these units. They saved the Soviet towns from complete starvation during the years 1918-1920. The most desperate months of the Civil War were from August to October, 1919, when a White army equipped by Britain and France reached a point about 200 miles from Moscow, while other forces, backed by a British naval squadron in the Gulf of Finland, were a few miles from Petrograd. At this moment the Bolshevik Party held a series of 'Party Weeks' in various parts of Soviet territory. Apart from soldiers at the front, over 200,000 workers and poor peasants (labourers) showed their confidence in the Party, and vastly strengthened its fight, by joining it—knowing very well that torture and shooting awaited any Communist captured by the Whites.

In 1919 workers took a step of historic importance. 'The Great Initiative', Lenin called it—was the action of 205 Communist and non-party railwaymen at a Moscow marshalling yard, that spring, in working voluntarily an extra 6-hour shift without payment, to help the country. They called it a 'Communist Saturday' (Subbotnik). Again the movement quickly spread. By 1920 it involved millions.

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This was the beginning of the great movement known as Socialist emulation, which continues to this day.

The Civil War ended in 1920, and the arduous work of reconstructing an utterly ruined and (in 1921-22) famine-stricken country began. Difficulties were immense, and gave rise in the autumn of 1923 to a rebirth of political faintheartedness within the Communist Party, led by the former 'lone wolf' Menshevik Trotsky. In the midst of the struggle, Lenin died (January, 1924)—a blow which ill-wishers abroad thought would be decisive. The Party leadership once more, as in 1919, called on the industrial workers to give it a vote of confidence. About 240,000 did so—by joining the Communist Party. Reconstruction continued successfully, and its completion in 1927-28, coinciding with the highest point of the political struggle against the followers of Trotsky, brought forth a new form of Socialist emulation. These were 'shock brigades'—teams of workers in the same factory who, inspired by socialist ideas, undertook to raise output, lower costs, improve industrial technique, by collective as well as individual effort. A group of young workers at a Leningrad textile factory started the movement. By December, 1929, there were 300,000 shock brigaders, and many varieties of emulation had been evolved. The most striking, in 1930-31, was the 'counter-plan' drawn up by the workers in response to the official draft plan of output for their factory. Millions newly brought from the villages into industry, in these years of the first Five Year Plan (1929-32), were encouraged in this way rapidly to master their jobs and learn socialist methods in industry.

The working class also played in those years a leading part in reorganising agriculture on socialist lines. The workers of an Ukrainian state farm, in the autumn of 1927, formed their tractors into a 'column', after their own harvesting was done, to help the individual peasants of 26 neighbouring villages with theirs. So successful was this work—the peasants wrote to the papers saying that the experience had opened their eyes to the advantage of large-scale co-operative mechanised farming—that the Communist Party took it up. In 1928 thirteen 'tractor columns' were set up in various parts of Russia; and in 1929 the State began establishing Machine and Tractor Stations all over the country to service the new collective farms, where the peasants decided to form them. Soviet agriculture today relies on these M.T.S. for its success. Again, in October, 1929, workers in two Rostov-on-Don factories took the initiative of giving practical help to the peasants in that region by organising and technically equipping collective farms.

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This attracted the attention of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Next month it launched a national campaign for 25,000 experienced industrial workers to go into the countryside as collective farm organisers. This proved the making of the system.

Whereas the first Five Year Plan of industrial output had been carried out 96 per cent in $4\frac{1}{4}$ years, the second Plan was over-fulfilled even more; labour productivity rose 41 per cent in the first Plan—under half of what had been laid down; and by 82 per cent in the second, or one-third more than planned. This was above all due to the tremendous impetus given by the new form of socialist emulation started in 1935—the Stakhanov movement, as it was then called after the Donetz coalminer who began it, following discussions in his pit. The idea was to rearrange the jobs of entire teams of workers, so as to take the fullest advantage of the ultra-modern machinery recently introduced. Again the Communist Party took up the idea, and it spread rapidly. As a result, when the third Five Year Plan (1938-1942) was interrupted by Hitler's assault, Soviet industry was both over-fulfilling its plans and much better able to recover, after the initial shock, than it would otherwise have been. This was shown by the way in which socialist emulation continued under incredibly difficult conditions, during the second World War (particularly in the 1,300 large factories transplanted to the east from occupied territories), overfulfilling plans and making possible the crushing victories of the Soviet armies. Arms from the west were only a drop in the ocean of Soviet war output.

Quite recently it has been made known that at the most critical point of the second World War—the battle for Stalingrad between September, 1942, and the end of January, 1943—the workers repeated the votes of confidence in the Communist Party which they had given in 1919 and 1924: 832,000 industrial workers and collective farmers joined its ranks in those four fateful months. This was the spirit, transformed into yet new waves of socialist emulation, which made it possible for Soviet economy to be rebuilt back to the pre-war level by 1948-49, instead of taking more than ten years as was feared at the end of the war. And in these days, when the scientific genius of the Soviet people has been brought home to the whole world by the tremendous achievement of the U.S.S.R. in launching the first space satellite, it is particularly important to notice its background—the great outpouring in inventive capacity by the working class of the U.S.S.R. in the course of its everyday occupations. Here is the story in figures (usually overlooked), as it has been recorded year by year in the reports of the Central

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Statistical Department, of inventions, technical improvements and rationalisation proposals successfully applied:

Year	*Industry alone*	*Year*	*Industry, transport and building*
1949	450,000	1953	850,000
1950	600,000	1954	900,000
1951	700,000	1955	1,000,000
1952	800,000	1956	1,200,000

Last year over a million inventors and rationalisers were registered in the special bureaux to encourage them which exist in all Soviet factories; and they made a total of over two million suggestions.

Stimulating this mental energy is the proud knowledge that the working class, through the democratic functioning of a socialist system of government, is the leading class of Soviet society. Take three features alone. Nearly 25 per cent of the members of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet are actually working at their trade, apart from hundreds of other Deputies who have gone on from the workshop to other posts. In the local authorities the proportion of women Deputies is highest (40 to 50 per cent) in the large towns just because there are found the highest concentrations of industrial workers. The whole social insurance system is controlled and administered by directly elected trade union committees.

The Soviet working class has shown its leadership in concern for the public good in many new and varied ways since the war.

In 1951-52 workers began volunteering in larger and larger numbers as 'public controllers'—first for spare-time investigation of such places as hospitals and other social service institutions, and then, in regular rotation and on behalf of their unions, to supervise factory canteens, shops and warehouses. Over 500,000 such public controllers are now functioning. In 1954-55 over 350,000 young people, chiefly the children of industrial workers, volunteered to help in breaking up the vast virgin lands of Siberia, which have revolutionised the situation in agriculture; and in 1956 another 500,000 youth volunteered to work in developing new industries in central Asia and Siberia, where immense natural wealth has hitherto lain dormant. In recent years in many factories the workers have taken the initiative, where necessary, in exposing bureaucratic or swelled-headed managers in the trade union press (particularly in the newspaper *Trud* since 1955), thus securing their replacement by better men and putting managements on their toes everywhere. In response to a call for collective farm organisers resembling that of 1929, the Soviet working class in the last few years has produced some 30,000 capable reinforcements for agriculture, which since

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1955 has depended much more than previously on local planning. Last year millions of workers, at the 9,000 largest industrial plants, discussed and improved the basic features of the sixth Five Year Plan. This year over 40 millions took an active part at factory and office meetings in the great debate on the new scheme for decentralising industry—itself the outcome of an experiment in pooling the building organisations of the Moscow region, which was begun through workers' criticism about overlapping.

This account could easily be extended; but surely the lesson is beyond challenge. Cooks and toolmakers have become statesmen. It is not a question of idealising the Soviet workers, or saying that everything in the first socialist country is perfect. What matters most in the 40 years' history of the Soviet Union is not this or that good or bad leader, but the fact that the scientific socialism of the C.P.S.U. has turned out to be in tune with the immense creative intelligence of a liberated working class, conscious that it has become the ruling class and therefore responsible for its country. Here in the Soviet Union is being fulfilled the promise of socialist society described by Engels in *Anti-Dühring*—

> the possibility of securing for every member of society, by means of socialised production, an existence not only fully sufficient materially, and becoming day by day more full, but guaranteeing to all the free development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties.

Here in the Soviet Union, where the proletariat in November, 1917, 'by means of a revolution . . . made itself the ruling class', it is actively preparing the conditions foretold by Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* a hundred years ago—the conditions of communist society, 'an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'.

And what they have done, we can do, if we have but the will.

Next month we hope to print extracts from a remarkable article recently published in Voprosy Istorii *by Ivan Maisky, formerly Soviet Ambassador in London. Included are some most interesting personal reminiscences by Maxim Litvinov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs from 1930-1939 and world-famous Soviet diplomat at the League of Nations between the two World Wars.*

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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

I. Highlights at Brighton

Councillor JOAN MAYNARD, J.P., C.C.
(Thirsk)

THE keynote at Brighton was unity: unity to win the next election—and, it seems looking back on the decisions made, unity to keep tottering capitalism on its feet.

On important issues like education and rents the Party failed to make a clear-cut statement about what it will do on return to power. True, we passed an emergency resolution on the Rent Act which condemned it 'as a vicious piece of legislation in support of landlords' vested interests'. We are to secure again security of tenure for all tenants not already evicted, but on the actual issue of rents we were wordy and indefinite. All recognise that this is a difficult problem, but the Labour Party must make it clear to the electorate now where we stand. As one much interested in education I deplore that though again we condemned the policy of block grants to Local Authorities, we did not say we would go back to percentage grants. The whole of the education world is incensed by Tory policy on this. The Association of Education Committees, the Association of Municipal and Borough Treasurers, the National Union of Teachers and some Tory County Councillors on my own Tory-dominated County Council are bitterly opposed because of its disastrous effect on education. To have said clearly that we would reintroduce percentage grants not only would have won the votes of the whole education world, but is the only position a Socialist can honestly take up. A good composite resolution moved by Montgomery asking for Local Government finance to be raised on the basis of income and Exchequer Grants provided on population instead of rateable value basis was remitted to the E.C.: they said they did not wish to be tied to definite proposals. How can a Party expect intelligent people to vote for it when it won't say where it stands on important issues?

However, in the debate on the national superannuation proposals the E.C. clearly knew where it wanted to be. Although Conference responded warmly to my Division's proposals for pensions out of revenue, at a flat rate tied to the cost of living, it either forgot the arguments by the end of the two-hour debate or was carried away by a clever speech by Dick Crossman, who replied for the E.C.

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The mover of a resolution at our *democratic* Labour Party Conference has no right of reply. All with experience of Conferences will know what a serious disadvantage this is to any delegate trying to carry a policy against the platform. In his defence of the superannuation proposals Mr. Crossman began by saying that if pensions came out of revenue then a Tory Chancellor in times of financial crisis such as the present would be in a strong position to cut expenditure on pensions. There are, I think, three answers to this: first, are we to assume that a Labour Government will always be so unsuccessful that the Tories will keep being returned to power? Secondly, if the flat rate of pension were tied to the cost of living it would be very difficult for a Tory Chancellor to cut it. Thirdly, Mr. Crossman who favours the shares plan in *Industry and Society* does not seem to have realised that a Tory Chancellor could sell back those shares to private industry if he so wished. Why does one argument apply to one policy and not to the other? Next, he argued that to finance pensions out of revenue, income tax in the pound would have to go up steeply, more steeply than people would be willing to pay. But the contributions for stamps each week may be more steep than people are willing to pay under the new scheme: what is the difference? Mr. Crossman's final point was that so long as trade unions supported wage differentials, we could not start the levelling process in old age. This is clearly the argument he has used to win the trade unions away from their long-held support of a flat rate. In the past it proved inadequate because it was not tied to the cost of living. The argument about wage differentials is like arguing: we have a wage structure which has grown up under capitalism, and we as Socialists are asked now to keep in being this capitalist structure into old age. It is a vicious circle. When do we break out and say we will begin to have Socialism, now—not in a never-never land?

Delegates who voted for the superannuation proposals did not seem to realise that these were closely linked with the Shares Plan in *Industry and Society*; for this fund is to be used to buy the shares. Once then having accepted the superannuation scheme they were half way down the slippery slope of accepting that abortion of Socialism, *Industry and Society*. Harold Wilson did his best to tell us what this pamphlet meant, but he only helped to add to the general fog and confusion. It was clear from the many speeches from the floor that the rank and file supported Jim Campbell (Railwaymen) when he moved the reference back. We then had to witness the spectacle of Frank Cousins (Transport Workers) and Ernest

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Jones (Miners) telling us that nationalisation is a good thing for their industries, but that in other industries they support the policy of buying shares as an alternative to nationalisation. Neither attempted to answer Jim Campbell's question: what would your members have said in 1945 if the Labour Government had said to them, 'we aren't going to nationalise your industry; we are going to buy shares in them instead'? One composite resolution gave a shopping list of industries it would like to see nationalised. As one delegate said: 'What is worrying us is will the next Labour Government go shopping at all!' All Socialists are shocked at the proposals contained in *Industry and Society,* for they run directly contrary to all that we as a Socialist Party have stood for. They suggest that we should share in the exploitation of our fellow workers by buying shares in private industry: more, that we should buy these shares where the profit is highest, in other words where the exploitation is greatest. This is indeed a bitter pill for any Socialist to swallow—the very negation of all that we have fought and worked for over the last fifty years. It is an attempt to cash in on capitalism. Apart from any moral feeling we may have on this issue, God knows why we want to cash in on a capitalism which is so obviously bankrupt—a capitalism which fails more clearly every day to face and overcome the challenge of our day.

On Thursday morning we had the most important debate of the week, on the H-bomb. Never has a Labour Conference demonstrated more clearly what it wanted than this one did on that Thursday morning: unilateral disarmament so far as the bomb was concerned. The platform looked round with ever growing alarm for supporting speakers for the composite resolution it wished to see carried, which in effect said no more testing of the bomb. All agreed that this would be an excellent first step; but Conference, which I am sure voiced the majority opinion of the British people, and indeed of ordinary people everywhere, wanted to go further than no testing. It wanted to be both logical and moral on this vital issue. Conference was against manufacture, use, or stockpiling of the bomb. Nye Bevan was the only man the E.C. dare put up on this controversial issue, and he has never had such a rough passage before any Labour Conference I have attended during the last eleven years. Delegates howled down his statement that if we voted for unilateral disarmament of the bomb, he would have to go naked as Britain's Foreign Secretary to the United Nations. No doubt they were thinking of India and the whole uncommitted block at U.N.O., their growing influence and the good work Pandit

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Nehru has done for peace, without the bomb. Had Britain renounced the bomb she would have been the undisputed leader of this block at U.N.O. and throughout the world. This would have given Britain more standing than all the H-bombs; and, most important of all, it would have been a great step forward for peace. Britain's possession of the bomb does not clothe her naked weakness in defence. Even a Tory Government has now admitted that it is impossible in an H-bomb war to defend the people of this island. However, the day was saved for the E.C. by Frank Cousins asking for time to reconsider, and asking for the vote to be postponed until after lunch. The platform had its victory when the vote was taken; which is more than Britain will have, should another world war come.

Unity at the top was preserved at this Conference. The fight for Socialism from the bottom was fiercer and stronger than ever. The heart of the movement is sound. The policies, if you can call them such, which were agreed on will prove to be so inadequate to meet the needs of the coming days that they will be swept aside. Our leaders may indulge in rethinking Socialism, but they are soon to find out that capitalism with all its attendant evils is basically the same today as ever. It cannot be taxed, reformed or bought out by a share-buying scheme. It can and will be replaced by Socialism when the time is ripe. A great army of us long—and work continuously—for that day; we shall not give up. For our army, the army of the working class, an army without military weapons, is so vast and so powerful that one day it will prove an irresistible force; and it will sweep away the evils of this present system and build in its place a Socialist Britain.

II. What Next for the Left?

Councillor JOHN LAWRENCE
(St. Pancras)

LOOKED at as an election programme the decisions of the Brighton Conference of the Labour Party are not anti-socialist. The repeal of the Rent Act (a big victory for the rank and file), a rise in old age pensions, nationalisation of steel and road transport with the right to take over any other industry, and finally, the unilateral stopping of H-bomb tests, together with support for the general Soviet proposals on disarmament, are all demands which the left wing has been fighting for. Why then the fierce denunciations of Aneurin Bevan and others for having 'sold

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the pass'? Why the present despondency and demoralisation in the left wing?

The first reason is that the left was trapped into discussing the main document *Industry and Society* not so much as an election programme but as a general statement of socialist principles. Jim Campbell (Railwaymen) moved the rejection of the document not so much, I am sure, because he had any serious quarrel with the actual programme contained in it, but because *he just didn't trust the National Executive Committee.* In this he had the support of most of the rank and file, and quite rightly so. 'By and large', says *Industry and Society,* 'large-scale industry is serving the nation well'. Now, whichever way you look at it, people who can subscribe to such statements are not to be trusted to carry through a socialist transformation of Britain. They have denied socialism and betrayed socialist thought. But instead of fighting the N.E.C. on this point of principle, instead of forcing them to defend their belief in capitalism, the left was tricked into attacking Gaitskell on his strongest side; namely, his immediate election programme. Instead of testing the socialist intentions of the N.E.C. by demanding the withdrawal of this violation of socialist principle, the left was out-manœuvred into arguing for some sort of universal takeover to be included in the programme for the next Labour Government. We didn't trust the N.E.C. to extend nationalisation in future; so we demanded, in effect, that they nationalise everything as soon as they take office! Naturally, Mr. Gaitskell had little difficulty in answering this line of attack. Both he and Harold Wilson were very anxious to assure delegates that, despite what the document said, nationalisation was *not* ruled out. These assurances were accepted by the majority of the conference and the big unions voted for the N.E.C. confident that *when the time comes* a new Labour Government will take over their particular industry. This doesn't mean the movement has walked away from nationalisation, and it is silly to say so. The hard core of the Labour Party and the trade unions is completely wedded to the idea of public ownership. If they are not very much excited about it as an immediate policy at the moment, it is because full employment and generally high earnings have taken the edge off this demand. In their present mood, many trade unionists are therefore inclined not to quarrel with Wilson and Gaitskell, who, reflecting the views of the non-socialist section of the population, obviously consider that nationalisation is irrelevant. We must be realistic about this. However, when unemployment again begins to hit Britain's industries, we can

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confidently rely on the developing class struggle to give rise to a mass popular demand that the Labour Government should nationalise the basic industries and plan the economy in the interests of the people.

Having said that, there is still concern for the degree to which non-socialist ideas have penetrated the leadership of the Party. To make sure that the inevitable future demands of the workers are not confused and side-tracked, some serious educational and propaganda work is required to raise theoretical understanding inside the Party. Instead of indulging in a public fight with the N.E.C. for the inclusion of universal nationalisation in the election programme (a hopeless fight in the present circumstances), we should smoke out the anti-socialists by fighting against all statements which conflict with socialist principles. This realistic approach will permit vital educational work to proceed within the framework of a general unity behind Labour's immediate election programme.

The other main reason for the split of the left wing is the confusion which arose, and still persists, on the issue of the H-bomb. Here also a big job of socialist education lies ahead; and as with nationalisation, it is a job which can be carried out whilst giving full support to the Party's electoral policy. The decision is to cease all nuclear weapon tests unilaterally and to seek an agreement with the other great powers for the total abolition of such weapons. It is an entirely progressive decision and one which can unite millions of people and win the coming election. Unfortunately, however, the great possibilities for developing the movement in opposition to the Tories around this demand are being obscured by a furious argument as to whether the next Labour Government, regardless of the attitude of the other great powers, should cease to manufacture the H-bomb. This proposition was put to the conference and, in a debate quite understandably charged with emotion, was decisively rejected. But the critics are not content to let it rest there. In their anger and frustration they have plunged up to the neck into the futilities of pacifism. With all the emotions that have quite properly been aroused by the H-bomb, socialists have, up to now, been loth to take up the cudgels with the pacifists. After Brighton, however, it can't be avoided. The ideas contained in the now famous Norwood resolution on unilateral disarmament don't help the left wing: they hinder it. Pacifist politics are altogether too simple. The bomb is an evil thing—away with it! That is the beginning and the end of their programme, and of course it doesn't get us very far. Socialists, on the other hand, will always draw a

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distinction between arms in the hands of the working class and arms in the hands of its enemies. The H-bomb, for all its horrors, doesn't alter this position fundamentally. If it is immoral to possess the H-bomb, it is immoral for the Soviet Union to possess it: that is the logic of the argument. But, unless we are to lose all sense of reality, it is clear that the H-bomb in the hands of the Soviet Union permits her to develop her social and economic policies undeterred by threats from world capitalism. If you accept that proposition, you can never support the demand which clearly implies that Russia should give up the H-bomb even if the United States of America still has it.

As with the Soviet Union, so also with a future British socialist government. The evil is not the bomb *as such*; it is the bomb in the hands of the enemies of the people. The argument with our right wing is not whether Britain should have arms; it is whether these arms should continue to hold in subjection the colonial peoples and continue to threaten those countries which are endeavouring to build socialism. This is an argument about political power, not about good and evil. If socialists in the Party shrink from employing such arguments—socialist arguments—it is due in no small measure to the anti-communist propaganda which we have permitted inside the Party for so long. The now furious ex-Bevanites should seriously ponder this. To most of them, Russia (that is socialism) with the bomb is as bad as America (that is, capitalism) with the bomb. Out of that unholy muddle no progress can possibly be made.

To sum up: the political and economic situation in Britain has more or less guaranteed the election of another Labour Government in a comparatively short time. This is a cause for genuine rejoicing, for no progress can be made while Macmillan's bandits control Britain's destinies. The Brighton Conference has committed the next Labour Government to many progressive measures. It has devised a programme which all socialists can support as a first step. If we have faith in the working class, if we base ourselves on the realities of the class struggle and if we endeavour at the same time to graft socialist theory on to the progressive aspirations of our fellow workers, the future is bright.

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III. The Rent Act Now

Councillor TOM VERNON
(General Secretary, National Association of Tenants and Residents)

THE demand, and its supporting campaign, for repeal of the 1957 Rent Act have been greatly strengthened in recent weeks by several events, most important amongst which is the decision of the Labour Party that the next Labour Government will repeal the Act and put through necessary legislation to cover the period before municipal ownership of rented houses is effected.

It is no secret that the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party contained opponents to the demand for repeal. It would be guesswork to say what grounds they had for tolerating an Act which, as a Bill, the Party had totally opposed, demanding its withdrawal and proposing no fundamental amendments. The preposterous nonsense that repeal was an impossibility, that eggs cannot be unscrambled, that there would be a vacuum in the law, has been killed by the emergency motion of the N.E.C. itself. This corresponds substantially with the precise proposals which many have voiced in their trades unions and local Labour Parties; and which I put forward in *Labour Monthly* three months ago.

How were such opponents prevailed upon to make this *volte face*? By campaigning. Organised tenants played some part and undoubtedly influenced discussions in local trade union meetings and conferences with the final effect of an unopposed resolution at this year's Trades Union Congress calling upon the next Labour Government to repeal the 1957 Act. That resolution, it seems safe to surmise, was the decisive factor in obliging the N.E.C. of the Labour Party to produce its emergency motion. The broad class character of the support, and the actual attendance, at the second mass meeting in Trafalgar Square organised by the National Association of Tenants and Residents demonstrated the political implications of the campaign for repeal and these were noted, no doubt, as much by the leaders of the Labour Party as by the B.B.C., who included this meeting in their same night television programme. All this is important because the need for a continued, and larger, campaign is evident. Pessimists about the value of such meetings, of marches and of petitions and deputations, who tried to discourage activity once the Act was passed, have been confounded by results. Everyone can feel confident that the traditional methods

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of influencing opinion and winning political successes are still correct.

The need for continued campaigning arises in two ways.

Any complacency as to the inevitability of a Labour Party victory at the next General Election and, in consequence, an early repeal of this Rent Act, would be extremely dangerous. The realistic view of many customarily Conservative voters that they must vote Labour next time in order to save their homes, and their pockets, must not be allowed to be gradually modified and then abandoned under pressure of Tory propaganda. Non-Conservative voters who do not always go to the polls have to develop an unshakeable intention to escape from the burdens and disasters of the 1957 Act by a political action, seeing that there is no alternative. All these have to understand what the Labour Party says it will do and to feel confident that the undertaking will be fulfilled. They must also be satisfied that the Party's proposals suit them.

Here is the second reason for maintaining and developing our campaign. The Conference resolution is, in fact, not entirely satisfactory. It was evidently prepared hastily and seeks, in some measure, to placate those N.E.C. members who wanted no new legislation and see municipalisation as the sufficient answer to tenants' demands for protection from unfettered landlordism.

The maintenance of security of tenure on houses still controlled, and restoration of this security to all properties decontrolled, meets the most vital points. The future of rents by the proposed new legislation is not clear and will be used by supporters of the Act (already there are signs of this) to conjure up a picture of rents no lower than the 1957 Act allows and they connect this with the alleged rent requirements to make municipalisation (with the overhaul of the houses and their modernisation that project promises) an economic proposition. Obviously, we need to know now what definition of 'fair and reasonable' rents is to be incorporated in the intended new Act for the guidance of the Rent Tribunals. Does 'fair' mean giving landlords a bigger yield on their ancient investments? Or does it mean giving an increase to cover higher repair costs and nothing more than that? The proposal to simplify procedure for getting disrepair certificates suggests something of that sort, I think. The word 'reasonable' added to 'fair' may be careless drafting. Perhaps the two words are thought to mean the same thing. But reasonable could mean (as shown in the High Court judgments on council rents) a balance between the demands of

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two parties to a lease, *i.e.*, giving a bit more *profit* to the landlord though, in deference to the tenant's interests, not so much as he would like. The proposal that new rents shall be fixed, not by a statutory formula nor by reference to pre-1957 Act rents, but by Rent Tribunals, is fantastic. Can it be imagined that the greater proportion of over five million tenants will go singly to Rent Tribunals? That such a procedure can quickly correct what the Conference motion rightly called victimisation of tenants? We have to get that proposal altered. Does the proposed right to apply to a Tribunal extend to tenants who have signed new leases to escape eviction, so that the terms of these can be amended? If not, that right must be conferred.

The opportunity lies before us of exerting our influence to improve the proposals of the Labour Party and to get rid of the ambiguities. The movement against the Rent Act has gained valuable ground thus far. With confidence in ourselves, fuller mobilisation of all tenants and unremitting effort we can secure that the *status quo* of security and rents be entirely restored; and by urgent action now minimise the evictions for which there can be no redress.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

MIRACLE OF ACHIEVEMENT

All this achievement is built upon a single definite base—the base of a revolution, of the workers' revolution. . . . All the wonderful creative, constructive work, which today arouses the admiration and the envy of the scientists, engineers, educationists, doctors and social reformers of the West; all the seeming miracles of economic transformation and dynamic achievement; all the triumphs of collective culture, education, a new way of living, release of energy, release of youth: all are the flowering from this one root. And for the same reason in capitalist Europe and America all the limitless resources and accumulated wealth, all the technique and unparalleled productive mechanism, all the skill and training of millions of workers, and all the science, accumulated knowledge and organising experience, result only in misery, want, conflict, cutting down of all constructive and cultural effort, decaying plant and decaying human beings, for the lack of this one factor. This is the fact we need to burn into the consciousness of all during these anniversary celebrations.

From *Notes of the Month*, by R.P.D., November, 1932.

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LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM

THIS MONTH *sees the beginning of the second year of Forum. In the first twelve months we printed, besides 44 brief notes, 72 letters, on: The H-Bomb and peace, 9; Overtime, 8; Women's Wages, 8; Youth Problems, 7; Rent Act, 7; Housing Policy, 6; Labour's Programme, 4; and the remainder on Automation, Socialist-Communist Relations, U.S. penetration, Israel, Colonial and other questions. This month the prize of One Guinea is not awarded. Letters for December (short, please!) by Monday, November 11, to:*

THE EDITOR, LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM,
134, BALLARDS LANE,
LONDON, N.3.

★

'Israel? It seems to me . . .'

Yet another expert on Israeli affairs has come forward! Reading Professor Levy's letter one is struck by the character of his arguments and the leniency of Dutt's reply.

The problem of the Arab refugees is one that causes the greatest rift between Arab and Jew. But what is Levy trying to justify? According to him, all that happened is that hundreds and thousands of Arabs panicked and fled during the creation of the State of Israel—that the Arabs are now suffering some of the historic injustices that the Jews have suffered for years: 'Over to you now, it is your turn to be a refugee!' Such an argument might well satisfy a Zionist, but it is hardly likely to satisfy an Arab. Therefore, Levy charges Dutt with futility in setting out the problems of this mass eviction: the real problem, he says, is that both Jewish workers and Arab peasants are joint victims, and they should unite. Everyone will agree with that: but does that mean the Arab world can ignore the present set-up in Israel? In Britain, we have a fine Communist Party and a strong working class: but the Soviet Union cannot ignore the fact that we also have a Tory Government and an imperialist foreign policy, and so defends herself accordingly. Similarly, the Arabs may see good workers and a fine Communist Party in Israel—but the country is led by a Government that is aiding and abetting imperialism. Or was the Sinai campaign all a dream?

The crux of the matter is whether Israel is a spearhead of America and imperialism. Levy says: true, they are the victims of American finance; but whilst they have a legal Communist Party and no foreign troops or bases on their soil, they are no more a spearhead of imperialism than the Indian people were during British rule. But how can the Professor ignore the fact that then Indians had a limited say in their own affairs, whilst today Israel has her own Government? Surely that alters the situation? If Levy denies that Israel is at present doing the dirty work for imperialism in many spheres, then of course he feels

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Israel is hard done by. Sympathy for Jewish workers and people is one thing, but sympathy for the policy of the Israeli state is another. This smacks of 'my country, right or wrong', and gives scant attention to the forces that rule Israel, both internally and externally. Naturally, most Jews have an understandable sympathy for Israel. But from personal experience, coming from a family of active Zionists, I know too well how emotion can blur objectivity. Yes, it could be a land flowing with milk and honey—but no more than any other land when the workers come to power; and at the moment the milk and honey are a long way off.

On the vexed question of Soviet arms to Arab countries: let us speak as plainly as Levy himself demands of Dutt. He puts forward a completely Zionist argument, which is not surprising, as he does not agree that Israel's pro-imperialist foreign policy is the very thing that prevents agreement with the Arab national leadership, and in which they see the greatest danger. Levy says Israeli people don't understand why the Soviet Union sold arms to Egypt. However, the Israeli people understood well enough why Israel bought arms from Czechoslovakia in 1947. Do they really think that when they buy arms, it is for defence; but when the Arabs buy arms, it is for aggression? Not after the recent British-French-Israeli attack, surely! What they have not yet realised is that sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander. So when Israelis say, according to Levy: 'The Soviet Union is driving us into the arms of America', not only is this blatantly ridiculous if you look at who owns factories all over Israel, but I suspect it is Levy talking as much as the Israelis.

It is not all black and white: Dutt made that clear in relation to the use of the Suez Canal. But present Israeli policy, in deliberately refusing to recognise that she is seen as an imperialist outpost is making matters worse.

One final point: Levy pours scorn on the view that the 'victory of Arab liberation may be regarded as certain in the near future'. Dutt rightly argues with Levy on this; but let us quote the Professor in full: 'I will chalk this prophecy up along with the many about the "final and inevitable crisis".' Why doesn't Levy have a bit more courage and say what he really thinks? Why only hint? He means that we have all been fooled about the inevitable crisis of capitalism. If he wishes to repudiate all that he has said and written for years, then that is his affair; but come out with it!

WOLF WAYNE,
Willesden.

'Dutt's Thinking Confused'

R. P. Dutt in his reply fastens on me views which I would scorn to hold; but never mind that. There are two elements in the Arab liberation movement of significance to us. One is definitely anti-imperialist, and therefore progressive. I support this and have often spoken on its behalf. The other is anti-Jewish, involving statements that the Jews must be cleared out of Israel, even actually wiped out physically. Being a Jew I am not allowed by Arab Governments to enter their countries. Advertisements here for posts there specifically exclude Jews. To understand exactly the source of this reaction, why and by whom it is fomented and for what purpose, the class alignments in the situation must be exposed. Dutt considers this unnecessary; it suffices for the liber-

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ation movement to be anti-imperialist. This attitude underlines my charge that the Soviet Union is exploiting anti-Jewish feeling in the Middle East in order to sharpen anti-imperialist feeling. This it does at the cost of splitting the working-class front, and Dutt condones this by silence. If my charge is false—I would be only too happy if it were—I will immediately withdraw it. If true, let Dutt admit it and justify it. Embedded in this is a moral issue of great importance to Marxism.

Dutt asserts that the Jews who have fled from the historically unparalleled massacres of Central Europe to refuge in Israel must be judged on a par with victorious Nazis who might have settled in East Anglia and forcibly expelled the English inhabitants. This outrageous and fabricated analogy reveals a vacuum in human feeling. To justify it he harks back to the early arrangement between British imperialism, and Zionism just after the First World War, under which settlers went to Palestine. Since then 5 million Jews—almost half of the world Jewish population—have been wiped out, the face of the whole world has changed, the Middle East and Israel have altered drastically, and British imperialism has receded before its American rival. It is in this situation that the problem has to be seen. Dutt asks us to see the similarity between victorious Nazis and hounded Jews.

Over many years both Dutt and I have been deeply mistaken about what was happening inside the Soviet Union. I must be forgiven then if I am a little sceptical about the accuracy and assurance of his predictions about the imminent victory of the liberation movement. To Dutt this proves that my faith in imperialism is greater than that of the imperialists themselves. I am not faced with the choice between faith in imperialism and Dutt's power of prediction. To question the latter is not to accept the former. This is typical of the confused thinking—I could call it something worse—at the root of this whole business.

HYMAN LEVY,
Wimbledon.

'Levy Has Fallen Victim'

Levy alleges that 'The Arab liberation movement' takes the position 'that the Jews must be cleared out of Israel, even actually wiped out physically'.

Here Levy has fallen victim to a very familiar falsehood of Zionist propaganda. The position of the Arab liberation movement has been repeatedly made clear in official statements, in the Cairo Declaration of the Arab League in 1956, and in the Bandung Conference resolution on Palestine subscribed to by all the Arab States. This position is for the fulfilment of the United Nations decision on Palestine. It is the pro-imperialist stooges in the Arab world, of the type of King Hussein and Nuri-Es-Said, who try to cover up their servility to imperialism by noisy talk about destroying Israel.

President Nasser, as a responsible leader of the Arab liberation movement, has repeatedly dealt with this Zionist falsehood and repudiated it. An example is the interview with him of Mrs. Dorothy Thompson in January, 1957: 'I asked the President, point blank, this question: "Do you intend to destroy Israel? It is said that this is your aim". He answered: "I dare M. Mollet or Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to find one word in any of my statements, from which it may be inferred that I wish to destroy Israel!".' And again in the interview given by President Nasser to the American writer, William

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Attward (*Daily Express*, June 11, 1957):

Q: 'Either you destroy Israel, or you want peace. What solution will you choose? Under what conditions would you agree to put an end to the state of war with Israel?'

A: 'I have never called for the destruction of Israel. A general settlement should take into consideration the rights of Arab refugees as well as the problem of borders. On the Israeli side, it should take into consideration their right to use the Canal and the Gulf of Akaba.'

Levy states that he and I have been 'deeply mistaken about what was happening inside the Soviet Union'. Let him speak for himself. The achievement of these 40 years demonstrates that we who were Communists before the Russian Revolution, and pledged the first public support to the imminent Bolshevik Revolution in the summer of 1917 before its victory, have been *deeply right* in our estimation of the essential historical significance of the Bolshevik Revolution and of the Soviet Union and its total record, against all the enemies and critics.

R. PALME DUTT,
London, N.3.

Limit Our Peace Demands

Ivor Montagu's article 'No! to the No-Men' displayed a dangerous leftist tendency. He says, for example 'it is up to those who have decided *for* settlements to expose their tactics and not to pull their punches out of any fancy that said gentry can be smarmed out of their positions'. If he is referring to Communists and Socialists acting through their political parties, all well and good. But, since it is difficult to remember when clear-sighted communists and socialists did pull their punches in this respect, one can only infer that Ivor Montagu is referring to their activities in the peace movement.

In this field, however, the situation is quite different. Such an attitude could only lead to a slanging match between ourselves and those who as yet are not prepared to put all the blame on capitalist powers. In the peace movement we have to be prepared to press limited demands. As more and more people see, despite capitalist propaganda, which countries meet these demands and which reject them, more people will be won to a greater unity with ourselves. It was the British Trotskyists who, until the dissolution of their party soon after the war, urged that we make the peace movement a socialist movement. This tactic was rejected; we should be taking a step backwards if we adopt it now.

J. A. WILSON,
Basildon.

. . . But Don't Cover Up

Of course Mr. Wilson is right, that to try to make the peace movement a socialist movement would be to hamstring it. This means that we must always convince those who want peace but dislike or mistrust socialism that peace, for us, is not a trick to smuggle revolution in at the back door. To do this we have to show that co-existence is peace; and that it must be sought by means fair to all, which favour neither of the two great world camps; and take account of the anxieties of both, as well as protect the interests of the uncommitted. But this is not the point. The point is that whereas, hitherto, with many of the disputed questions, the Western negotiators, in being 'difficult', could reasonably have been held to be con-

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cerned with precautions legitimate from their point of view, and were at least engaged in 'hard bargaining'; the present proposals are so preposterous that they cannot conceivably be regarded as sincere. They are *intended* to preclude agreement; and we must carefully show this by analysis and without abuse. Peace cannot be served by covering up for the enemies of agreement and by us pretending unnecessarily to ignore the facts.

IVOR MONTAGU,
Watford.

So Ignorant of Socialism

Many thanks for Margot Heinemann's article 'Shareholding or Socialism?' and the references to the subject in R.P.D.'s Notes of the Month. If *Labour Monthly* could reach further and command the readership it deserves throughout the labour movement, what a difference in ideas it could produce!

We see the British working class in a dilemma because of lack of leadership, for lack of a policy that will give them some hope for a better society. The tragedy that is most revealing is the utter ignorance of socialist ideas in local labour parties and labour groups on local authorities. This article has to be taken to these councillors, ward members, and so on, so that socialist ideas can be introduced to combat the capitalist ideas that have been peddled in *Industry and Society*.

Even now there are those in our midst who believe that present day nationalisation that has taken place is 'socialist'. There are too many ideas prevalent that 'you have to be fair'; that you can't take away an industry built up by certain men's 'initiative'. There is too little measuring of human suffering to balance the argument that the industrialists have an enormous debt to pay to society. We have those who have the temerity to say, such as an I.R.I.S. spokesman, that we spend too much, that we have to understand that we must have a standstill on wages. We are in a dangerous situation. There is far too much American investment in our country. All the more reason to take over!

Labour must come out for ever-increasing socialisation. It is time the Old Age Pensioners, the widows especially of those in industry, should reap the benefit from industry and not those who have ruined it; nor the cheap services of nationalisation to those whose sole aim is maximum profits.

ARTHUR LEWIS JONES,
Merthyr Tydfil.

Airy-Fairy Double-dealing

You can talk all round the clock about women's low wages being a threat to standards, and the need to educate her to organise herself. Meanwhile see how her paper educates her each day, in the spirit of Blow you, Jack, I'm—still—all right. Look at the education she got during the Labour Party Conference! Delegates cajoled into accepting as the ultimate ambition Fair Shareholding for All. Providing 'help' for the colonial peoples in the form of 'capital investment' of about a hundredth part of what the Bookers and Dunlops loot from them in a year. Non-contributory pensions? for the capitalist class only, for ever and ever, amen: the rest of us can pay through the nose from the cradle to the grave.

Let's get down to earth, away from this airy-fairy double-dealing nonsense that drove decent delegates wild. Educate her by explaining that the 'efficient' capitalist is the one who extracts the most surplus value

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from her, and is therefore the one who needs expropriation first.

T. M. WOOD,
Lancs.

Pension-less War Veterans

Pensioners, be they war or old age, undoubtedly are the hardest hit section of the community. Their position is much aggravated by the fact that the pension remains static, does not rise in accordance with the increased cost of living. There is, however, one type of war veteran who to my knowledge has never at any time been mentioned. That is the ex-Serviceman from World War I who has never received a pension. Thousands of these, who have passed away by reason of age and illness, were called up under the Lord Derby Conscription Act of 1916: their health ruined by malaria; enteric fever; dysentery and other maladies such as nervous exhaustion. These poor mortals never got a pension, although they appeared before a T.M.B. (Travelling Medical Board), whose decision was that their sickness was 'not attributable to war service'.

Then came the aftermath of war; unemployment and hunger from 1919 right onward. Men from World War I were put on 'relief work' so-called; but often they were so ill that they collapsed on the job. Not a few were called before the 'unemployment tribunal' and so deprived of their unemployment benefit. Two of the most vicious legal measures following World War I were firstly, the 'not genuinely seeking work' clause, to cut off their benefit; secondly, the terrible 'means test', which was legalised starvation.

To my mind I cannot see a solution through the so-called 'peaceful channels of parliamentary constitutional government'. J. L. SMITH,
Staffs.

'It Was This Made Me Rebel'

Since last August I have landed in that last ditch with my old age pension of 40s. and 25s. for the pair of us. That has forced me to adopt an attitude of 'thinking what I can manage without, not what I want'. Those words are what I heard when I was a boy of 10 years of age. It was said by a gambling, thriftless father to my hard working mother, who had reared ten sons and four daughters. He had won £200 and he stayed at home until it was all gone. It was when he had brought his first honest earnings home after that, that my mother asked him if he had any money for her, as he had given her none for eight weeks. The poor old girl went through the list of clothes, boots and so on that the children needed, and as usual left herself to the last. There he stood, his hand on the door handle, and replied: 'Mary, you must exercise that excellent mind of yours, thinking what you can manage without, not what you want; and you will find it ever so much easier and far more economical.'

I left off cleaning the knives and asked my mother the meaning of economical? With tears in her eyes she told me to forget it. But I did not forget it. With the kitchen all to myself I repeated the damnable jingling mouthful, piece of philosophic servitude, that can stifle every hope of advancement of any kind. It made me think seriously; and those words made me a lifelong rebel. That was 65 years ago.

And now circumstances are forcing me to apply personally that hateful dictum: for the first time I can add nothing to my subscription.

'REBEL',
(Name supplied) *Notts.*

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Book Reviews

NUCLEAR PROGRESS

Our Nuclear Adventure—Its Possibility and Perils, by D. G. Arnott. (170 pp. Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd. *11s. 6d.*)

THE menace of nuclear warfare has become so overwhelming that it overshadows the wider significance of the 'atomic age' into which mankind has entered. But this is an entirely new stage in human history and it affects our daily life to an ever-increasing extent. Dr. Arnott is deeply convinced that the problems involved, with their social and political implications, should not be left to the specialists, but that ordinary men and women should 'reassert their sacred right of interference in all matters which concern them'. He is convinced that the main facts of the present state of our knowledge should be available to all and can be presented in such a way that they can be understood by anyone. That is what he has set out to do in this book. He has the qualifications for doing so and he has succeeded admirably. There is no other book which covers such a wide field so simply and concisely, which explains so excitingly yet without sensation the vast potentialities of nuclear energy for human benefit, and assesses from such a broad social viewpoint the hazards involved in its use and especially its misuse.

Part I boils down the basic scientific information necessary in a mere 30 pages. Part II gives all the relevant facts about nuclear bombs and their effects. Readers of the *Labour Monthly* will know how clearly he explains the differences between the different types of bomb from his article in the August issue where he exposed the myth of the 'clean bomb.' Here he deals, too, with all aspects of fall-out, including strontium-90, genetic hazards and even the effect of the weather. Part III on the constructive use of nuclear energy begins by showing clearly the crisis facing the world in default of new power sources, not least the inevitable inadequacy of coal as a source of power in Britain, and the inspiring possibilities now opening of unlimited power. He gives the facts about nuclear power stations and Britain's nuclear programme, and deals also with the dangers involved in the absence of adequate social control.

Part IV, on 'Living with the Nucleus', is especially important as it sums up and draws conclusions. The first portion is necessarily the verdict on the bomb. He stresses that what makes nuclear weapons different is that they make the destruction of the basis for organised human life not only technically feasible but the likely outcome of a nuclear war. He disposes of the casuistry of the politicians' talk and excuses. Here some of his formulations on these vexed questions may perhaps be open to criticism or at least require more elucidation. He says of the 'H-bomb deterrent' that 'it is no more than a stop-gap' and that 'the problem (of nuclear weapons) reduces to one of preventing any local flare-up from enlarging into a conflagration which shall finally be fatal to organised human life'. At any rate he rightly sees that the way out lies in the effective exercise of the weight of world disapproval.

A final chapter on 'Secrecy and Responsibility' gives a withering exposure of the idiocy and harmful results of the official policy of secrecy. No less harmful is the divorcing of scientists from responsibility. The problems of the wise use and social control of nuclear energy

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point above all to the great dangers involved in the 'alienation of the common man from any semblance of control over his own destiny'.

CLEMENS DUTT.

A WELCOME NEW PERIODICAL

Marxism Today, Vol 1, No. 1, October, 1957. (32 pp. Communist Party, London, *1s. 6d.*)

IT IS a pleasure to welcome this new addition to the ranks of Marxist periodicals. Since the demise of the Marxist Quarterly the need for such a theoretical discussion journal of Marxist theory has been keenly felt. The first number contains a wealth of varied contents in this field. Especial interest attaches to Emile Burns' article 'Is the Theory of Crisis Out of Date?', in which he breaks important new ground in examining with concrete data some of the significant new features of the latest phase of monopoly capitalism since the second world war; and to Harry Pollitt's record, enriched with personal reminiscences, on 'The October Revolution and the British Labour Movement'. In the literary sphere Arnold Kettle writes on Blake as 'the greatest revolutionary poet Britain has known'; while Maurice Cornforth contributes a somewhat controversial article on philosophy.

A very wide field opens before this journal, as the announcement of forthcoming contributions indicates. The role of *Marxism Today* as a theoretical discussion organ is all the more important at present, in view of the spate of new journals and periodicals claiming to represent Marxism, but in fact mainly characterised by venomous hostility to the revolutionary movement internationally and in Britain, combined with infantile ignorance of Marxism. This situation, which is a symptom of the intensity of current interest in Marxism, even though too much of the current discussion is based on a handful of secondhand and third-hand formulas and vulgarisations misunderstood, gives the more reason to wish all success to *Marxism Today* in its vitally important task of contributing to creative Marxism and helping to clarify major problems of Marxist theory.

R.P.D.

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Published by the Proprietors, The Trinity Trust, 134, Ballards Lane, London, N.3, and printed by Wembley News, Wembley, Middlesex, Great Britain. Registered for transmission by Magazine Post to Canada, including Newfoundland.

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(Continued from page ii of cover)

Other readers have outlined extremely interesting plans which I will spotlight as results are reported.

How interesting these letters are! Why, what came to light following the letter from the eighty-year-old *craftsman in Wiltshire* offering us his tools for the fund is a story in itself—incomplete as yet, as all the best stories are. Here it is impossible to quote from even a handful; indeed, influenza has given us such headaches—literally—that we have not been able to answer them all. *Subscribers* who replied to our letter explaining how heavily we are affected by the vast new postal charges please note that we are working over their many welcome suggestions. Meanwhile we offer United Kingdom subscribers the choice of having it sent by wrapper at 18s.; or bearing half the increased postage if it is dispatched by envelope at £1. And many, many thanks to those who decided to pay full postage in the future, or to pay their subscription in advance to save postage on reminders. This is how one seventy-five-year-old *Essex pensioner* put it: 'I must face up to the fact of increased postal charges, and if I still want my L.M. delivered on time, I must be prepared to pay the extra cost, and not let it be borne by the publisher. Everyone who values his L.M. should be prepared to do the same if possible. As you do not raise the price of the journal, why not ask how many regular subscribers would willingly offer to pay the full rate of 22s. per year? Or alternatively, pay the 18s., but contribute the extra 4s. to the fund: less than one penny a week extra'. The September total already begins to reflect the result of the appeal in money terms;

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